



Governor Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor Adam Gregg
San Wong, Director

ICSAA

Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans

Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans

Virtual Commission Meeting

June 30, 2022

3:00 – 5:00 PM

Minutes

Welcome and Roll Call:

Meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. by chairperson Ahmadu Baba-Singhri

Dr. Baba-Singhri welcomed everyone to the meeting including new commission members Wendell Talley, Dr. Jonathan Whitfield and Whitney Smith McIntosh. Kim Cheeks called the roll for attendance.

Present

Ahmadu Baba-Singhri, Whitney Smith-McIntosh, Wendell Talley, Johnathan Whitfield

Absent: Aaron Sewell, Rosalind Peebles Fox

Staff

Kim Cheeks, Monica Stone, Maria Guevara

Guests: AIFE – Dr. Henry Lejukole and Mercy Issa

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the April 28, 2022 minutes was made by Dr. Whitfield. However, upon discussion the minutes provided were from March not April. Minutes were unable to be approved.

Reports:

Office

The new fiscal year starts July 1st. A budget increase looked promising however budget has stayed the same for the fiscal year. Stone also discussed a new data initiative in partnership with Iowa State University on how many [languages are spoken](#) in Iowa and where. This information could help public health, persons with disabilities and deliver more effective communication. Monica shared DHR will provide a short commission orientation. It was decided to look at dates in early August.

Kim Cheeks shared a brief overview of her office report for the commission FY2022 – (March – June 2022).

Commissioners Reports

Chair Baba-Singhri shared Rep. Isenhart will join the next meeting to talk about his environmental initiative.

Talley reports he volunteered at a local Juneteenth event. It was a very good turn out even for his area of the state, NE Iowa. He also met with members of organization Dubuque Forward to discuss initiatives to improve reading and writing abilities in the community.

Smith-McIntosh helped with parades in Des Moines and she started a prayer service as she is a Chaplin.

Dr. Whitfield attended Juneteenth celebration in Polk County. He reports it had a gospel choir which was very moving. He also looked into an organization that helps improve voter turnout.

He also participated in a recognition ceremony to celebrate churches that helped many during the COVID-19 Pandemic. He would also like to invite us to the Baptist Church Convection, August 15 -17, he will be making an address.

Old Business:

Legislative Black Caucus was not able to meet with director San Wong, nothing to discuss.

Chair Baba-Singhri reports he spoke to Representative Ruth Ann Gaines about the meeting with Governor Reynolds however was unable to meet with her prior to the meeting.

It was discussed about moving meetings to in person. It was decided Hybrid meeting sessions would be good as some prefer in person over virtual or maybe unavailable in person.

New Business

Dr. Lejukole who is vice chair reports AIFE – Africans in Iowa For Empowerment, started in 2014 when the Ebola outbreak happened. Their organization provides programming on computer and financial literacy. They host an African Festival for community engagement. This is the 8th year of holding a festival. This year it will be a fall festival. It will be August 28th this year. Dr. Lejukole reports in Iowa there is a large population of West African people from Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Congo

He would like to invite DHR to the event so we may have a booth. He reports the most common languages spoken by African communities are English followed by French.

Public Comment

None present

4:07 p.m. meeting adjourned.

Minutes prepared by:

Maria Guevara

Maria Guevara